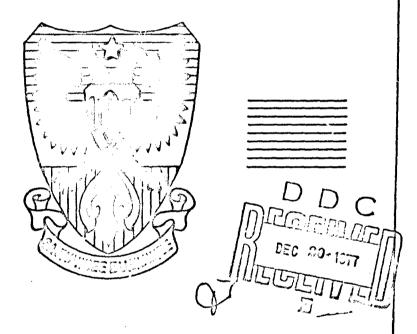
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STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

MAJ JAMES A. WRIGHT
SOVIET RELATIONS WITH JAPAN:
POOR TREATMENT OF
A VALUABLE TRADE PARTHER?
1977

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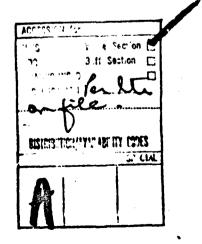
FOREWORD

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of the overseas phase of training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

Only unclassified sources are used in producing the research paper. The opinions, value judgments and conclusions expressed are those of the author and in no way reflect official policy of the United States Government; Department of Defense; Department of the Army; Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff of Intelligence; or the United states Army Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies.

Interested readers are invited to send their comments to the Commander of the Institute.

ROLAND LAJOIS LTC, MI Commander



In this paper the author attempts to examine contemporary Soviet-Japanese relations and to assess the impact of recent leadership changes in Japan, the United States, and China--the remaining partners to the regional contest. The author suggests that Soviet short-term requirements for energy and technology, in concert with a competition for influence in Tokyo, will lead to major Soviet initiatives to increase economic cooperation with Japan.

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. FUNDAMENTAL POLICY INTERESTS: THE SOVIET VIEW	5
3. FUNDAMENTAL POLICY INTERESTS:	36
THE ISLAND VIEW	10
FOR INCREASED TRADE AND	14
COOPERATION WITH JAPAN	14
SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS: CHANGES OF THE GUARD	27
6. RELATIONS: THE PROSPECTS	40
POOTNOTES TO THE TEXT	45 57
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INTRODUCTION

The development of our relations with Japan follows a generally positive direction. The Soviet Union trades extensively with that country. A number of mutually beneficial economic agreements have been concluded. Contacts between political and public personalities have become much more active, and our cultural ties are growing... As we see it, good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation should be the rule in Soviet-Japanese relations, and that is what we are working for...

Leonid Brezhnev
Report of the Central
Committee of the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union,
24 February 1976

The past decade has witnessed a new Soviet interest in Japan, as a natural trade partner in the geographic sense, and notably in the potential economic advantage of joint development of Siberian resources. In 1972, a Soviet announcement of a search for "fundamentally new forms of interaction and cooperation" signalled progress for the nagging problems of a Soviet-Japanese peace treaty and a territorial dispute over the southern Euril Islands.

Although the Soviet leadership emphasizes the necessity for exploiting the advantages of foreign economic relations, particularly for the current economic plan, there has been considerably less progress in the development of ties with Japan than might be expected. Naturally, the recent Sino-Japanese normalization of relations has had an inhibiting effect upon "mutual progress" in Soviet-Japanese relations. However, closer economic cooperation and Japanese involvement in Siberian development--and its concomitant effect upon the Sino-Japanese equation -- can be considered to be of major interest to the Soviet Union. Additionally, joint economic ventures would further a basic Soviet goal of a neutralized Japan; this aim has gained renewed importance for Soviet planners in the post-Vietnam era as the United States reassesses its committments in Asia. However, the recent off-loading of some nineteen large crates from a Soviet vessel in Nakhodka, perhaps bearing the stamp "MIG-25 - Inspected In Japan," reflects only one recent setback for the USSR in creating a more "favorable climate" for relations with its island neighbor.

Nevertheless, while beating the drum about the "sharpening contradictions" or economic troubles within the capitalist system, 2 the Soviet media stresses that

the broadening of relations with western markets is a necessary component of the scientific-technical revolution. 3 Moreover, it is asserted that access to the socialist market is increasingly sought by western powers, to include Japan, 4 as a means by which capitalist economies can reduce their unemployment. In fact, the USSR's need to improve industrial efficiency and to hasten the exploitation of mineral and energy reserves in Siberia has sanctioned economic cooperation with western markets. The recognition that this need must be met by the timely application of western credits and technology comprises what I have termed the "developmental imperative" for improved relations with Japan (see Chapter Pour). Certainly, increased cooperation with Japan as the third largest world economic power would significantly enhance timely development schemes.

Soviet-Japanese relations are, of course, of continuing interest given the intersection of strategic interests in the Pacific region. This paper proposes to examine, with some reference to traditional issues, the nature and direction of current Soviet relations with Japan, acknowledging the emergence of three new variables: changed leadership in the United States, China, and Japan, the remaining partners to the regional

contest. Naturally, the scope of the subject itself leads to some necessary generality in discussion; this brief paper will attempt to focus upon contemporary political and economic imperatives which may shape the future of relations between Japan and the Soviet Union in the near term.

Chapter 2

FUNDAMENTAL POLICY INTERESTS: THE SOVIET VIEW

Soviet relations with Japan, long characterized by armed conflict and rivalry in the Far Eastern USSR and Asia, must be considered within the framework of the current regional power balance. A basic post-World War II goal of a neutralized Japan has lost none of its validity for the USSR; in the postwar period. Soviet policymakers faced the emergence of an industrially powerful Japan as an American ally, a base for U.S. operations in Korea, and forward support for U.S. activities in Vietnam--a Japan impelled to maintain its partnership with the United States in Asia.

An invitation to Japan to participate in the development of the Siberian and Far Eastern regions, stressing mutual economic benefit, serves not only to meet actual and projected economic needs. Japanese credits and technology, spurring the development and transport of energy, mineral, and timber resources east of the Ural Mountains, would assist in more rapid settlement of areas along the vital Trans-Siberian communications line, thus reducing the vulnerability of those regions to any Chinese military threat. Increased Sovia:-Japanese cooperation, involving far more than the

one billion dollars in long-term credits granted by the Japanese Export-Import Bank in April 1975. Could tend to alter the regional power balance with minimal risk to the Soviet Union. Large-scale Japanese investment in Siberia, in the writer's opinion, would inhibit Japanese policy alternatives and, accordingly, improve the regional position of the Soviet Union. Thus, Japan has repeatedly been urged to take better advantage of the "international division of labor" since the "stable socialist foreign trade market, which is not subject to market fluctuations" will become increasingly important for that island country.

The Chinese challenge to the Soviet Union, extending also to economic and political Cominance in the third world community, remains a fundamental concern for the Soviet leadership. The obvious and oft-belabored geographic factors—some four thousand miles of contiguous border with a hostile neighbor—have spurred the buildup of Soviet forces in the area from some twelve to almost fifty divisions, with corresponding increases in air, naval, and missile forces. Protracted negotiations with China over disputed border areas remain at a low level.

The extension of Soviet naval might into the Indian Ocean reflects the basic policy of the Soviet Union, as

a major power now at least possessing strategic "parity" with the United States, to strengthen its power and influence in Asia. Traditional diplomacy has, meanwhile, not been ignored as a means of further shifting the balance of the "world correlation of forces"--military, economic, and political--further in favor of the Soviet Union. Robert Pfaltzgraff has described the game of Asian politics as the interaction of major powers, each attempting to prevent the others from developing closer ties, while pursuing issues of mutual concern or self-interest.

Thus, sensing a relative decline in the U.S. global position in the post-Vietnam era, the Soviet Union has moved to improve relations with Japan and the United States, offering a peace treaty to Japan--albeit on strictly Soviet terms--and an opportunity for the U.S. to join Japan in the exploitation of resources in Siberia.

Moscow's proposals for an Asian Collective Security
Treaty, first aired in 1969, have suffered as much from
ambiguity as from disinterest on the part of Asian nations.
The stated Soviet goal of all-round security in Asian international relations is recognized as an attempt to
isolate China and to prevent the nightmare of a Chinesesponsored security arrangement in northeast Asia.

Blocking Sino-Japanese partnership has assumed a higher priority since the beginning of discussions between the two countries in regard to conclusion of a peace treaty. The controversial "anti-hegemony clause" barring the hegemony of any third power in Asia was, claimed Moscow in mid-1975, "really directed against the Soviet Union and aimed at drawing Japan into the stream of Peking's anti-Soviet policy."

The Soviet design for the "neutralization" of Japan recognizes the importance of the Japanese "special position" under the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Agreement for the maintenance of regional stability. While the Soviet media cries the litany of resurging Japanese militarism, the U.S. military presence and security guarantee serves both as a counterweight to Chinese influence and brake against Japanese perceptions of greater defense needs. The prospect that Japan may take up the slack as the United States reduces its committments abroad is a most alarming one for Moscow, not to mention the majority of the Japanese body politic. Plans to withdraw U.S. ground forces from Korea (the process of removing some nucleartipped ground-to-ground missile units has already begun) increase the possibility, however, that the Japanese may feel compelled in the future to introduce new weapons

programs. Thus, while pursuing a policy of detente with the United States in the global arena, the Soviet Union tacitly recognizes that the "immovable aircraft carrier" of American imperialism in Japan is a valuable hedge against a rearmed Japan.

An improvement of relations with Japan, perhaps leading to more ambitious economic cooperation, would also represent at least another step toward the Soviet goal of detaching Japan from the United States. A pressing need for more rapid development of energy reserves—to be discussed in a following chapter—may be the reason for renewed trade initiatives by the Soviet Union in the near future.

Chapter 3

FUNDAMENTAL POLICY INTERESTS: THE ISLAND VIEW

"Equidistance" and the U.S. Security Shield

Visit to Japan, reaffirmed Japan's special position with regard to the United States which has figured so prominently in Japan's postwar economic progress. The U.S. nuclear shield effectively balances the potential influence or pressures of her mainland neighbors and, at the same time, despite a decade of warnings to the contrary by commentator Bandura in the pages of Pravda, has permitted a very low level of defense expenditures by Japan. Absence of the guarantee would, naturally, limit Japan's options severely, regardless of the bitter dispute between the Soviet Union and China.

A powerful rivalry between Japan and Russia---"to trust the bear is to be destroyed by him"--was strongly reinforced by Stalin's late entry into WWII against Japan in violation of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact. Traditional enmity remains, but more immediate interests have prescribed Tokyo's postwar policy of "equidistance" from both Moscow and Peking. First, the postwar realities of a defeated nation permitted little more than passive relations with the Soviet Union and

China as Japan aligned her brightening economic future with the western world. Second, an anti-military reaction, embodied in Article Nine of the Japanese constitution--renouncing war--has been a major factor in the emergence of an economically powerful Japanese state rather than a militarily powerful one. The U.S. security guarantee, in force since 1951, has done much to reduce Japanese fears of aggression. Thus, with a population of some 100 million, Japan has managed to maintain its Self-Defense Forces at a level of about 235,000 troops. 1 However, there are growing pressures within Japan to reasses Japanese security needs "after thirty years of comfortable seclusion."2 Since the shokku3 of then U.S. President Nixon's 1971 sojourn to Peking--without previously consulting the Japanese leadership--Japan's reliance upon the United States has come under question. Nevertheless, a political decision to rearm would appear inconsistent for the Japanese, given the costs of independence from U.S. power -- not to mention the unsettling effect upon a policy of "equidistance" if the Soviet Union and China should draw closer as a result of a real or imagined threat from Japan. 4 Purther, there remains much public opinion against "going nuclear," even though Japan has the capacity to do so in a very short period. 5

The Goal of Economic Stability

The Japanese national traits of frugality and responsibility aided in the rapid rehabilitation of the island nation from the ravages of war. Successive postwar administrations strove for the expansion of trade for "Japan, Incorporated" or society as a whole, but well before public welfare and other services were extended at a level comparable with the west. Today, along with pressures to pay greater attention to the islands' environment, the Japanese leadership is faced with public demands to maintain a high living standard. This means, basically, that Japan must endeavor to secure unrestricted access to raw material imports; in view of her ninety per cent dependency upon such imports, access to producers of energy and petrofuels is a primary Japanese objective.

Moscow has not missed an opportunity to comment upon Japan's economic troubles in the wake of the 1973 energy crisis, which caused the Japanese economic growth rate-in sharp contrast to postwar performance-to plummet from an average of ten to twelve per cent per year to minus 1.8 per cent. Recovery thus far has been aided by reducing inflation to a manageable ten per cent per annum? and by limited measures to cut trade surpluses with the

United States and Europe. Japanese concern for the stability and proper functioning of the world trade system acknowledges that Japan's economic impact will be even more strongly felt through the 1980's. Possible repercussions from growing trade imbalances with major partners are already worrying Japanese business circles, not to mention those in Western Europe and the United States.

A Widening Political Role for Japan

It is precisely Japan's world economic impact and the uncertainties of American Asian policy in the post-Vietnam period that has led Tokyo to seek a greater flexibility and independence in her own foreign policy program. As third-ranking world economic power, critically aware of her dependency upon imports and unfettered maritime trade, Japan has begun to develop closer ties with producers of raw materials. Concurrently, the Japanese leadership has responded to the urging of western nations for greater participation in management of global economy.

It remains to be seen, however, whether the continuing Japanese search to diversify sources of raw materials and energy will prompt new initiatives to her mainland neighbors.

Chapter 4

THE DEVELOPMENTAL IMPERATIVE FOR INCREASED TRADE AND COOPERATION WITH JAPAN

In a comparison of early industrial transformation of Japan and the Soviet Union, Cyril Black notes that both countries have historically reflected two similar characteristics: their ability to mobilize and control resources, both natural and human, and to borrow "institutions, technology, and capital from more advanced countries without any detriment to national sovereignty."

As noted earlier, the above observation did not apply to the Soviet Union in the immediate post-WWII period, during which the USSR pursued an autarchic and militarily powerful development program. While the Soviet Union devoted some ten per cent of her gross national product to military expenditures, Japan carried out an ambitious program of obtaining patent licenses and similar production agreements—some 10,000 of them—devoting less than one per cent of GNP on defense. Thus, Japan was able to take advantage of the postwar situation to remobilize her wociety to achieve the phenomenal growth rates which held steady until the oil crisis of 1973. It is not surprising that the Soviet Union is turning to the West and Japan, at the "very center of the contradictions of the imperialist internationalist world" for the technology transfer

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"dictated by the demands of the scientific-technical revolution" -- in other words. acquisition of the western technology counted upon for improvement and modernization of the Soviet economy.

Fulfilling the Plan

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The current 10th Five-Year Plan, assessed as the "most modest medium-term plan in Soviet History," appears to take into account some of the problems of the seventies, including the absence of abundant reserves of labor with which to maintain a high growth rate. An already high proportion of the Soviet GNP is pushed into gross investment, and this practice is further strained by the need to develop new and alternate energy sources in the remote Siberian and Far Eastern regions. The persistent problem of agriculture--1975 grain shortfalls prevented achievement of overall plan goals for 19766--should be ameliorated somewhat by the record grain harvest last year.

As usual, pressures for more rapid growth of the consumer sector of the economy have been kept in check. Economic reforms during the previous 9th Five-Year Plan did little to overcome the inherent problems of centralised planning, lack of incentives, and bureacratism which have characterized the Soviet production process. No new policy change glimmers on today's horison, and western

observers suggest that the stock Soviet response to a declining growth of productive resources will be continued recentralization and tightening of controls. It appears that the USSR, acknowledging the slowdown in the growth of capital stock and a concurrent decrease in the growth of total output (expected for a more mature economy at high performance levels), must improve overall labor productivity, but based upon technology imported from the west rather than from adding large numbers of new workers to the Soviet labor force. A pillar of the post-1970 policy of detente is the creation of the proper framework for "normalisation of relations" to gain access to the required volume of technological resources. Naturally, from the Soviet view, the "demands of western powers for the development of economic ties with socialist countries are becoming ever sharper."8 Accordingly, although plan figures for the growth of foreign trade in 1976-1980 are slightly lower than those of the previous planning period, it is predicted that actual growth will far surpass stated goals. This is due first to the unlikelihood of any real change in the level of overall efficiency in the economy which would tend to reduce the need for high-technology imports. Secondly, the "compensation agreements" -- barter arrangements and product-payback deals--preferred by the

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regime do not figure in foreign trade statistics. This "new form of economic cooperation" also frees the Soviet planner from the uncertainties of foreign market analysis, pricing, and currency controvertibility.

Pueling the Production Machine

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The 10th Five-Year Plan merely underscores the priority of heavy industry, consumers of energy, as the key to current Soviet economic strategy. The improvements in growth capability desired by Moscow, improved labor productivity and capital-output ratio, demand increased energy allocations. 11 As a result, there is a pressing need to expand the source of supply today:

Long-range estimates indicate that the development of the national economy will become increasingly dependent upon the possibility of obtaining cheap energy. Searches for new modes of energy supply--including atomic energy--show that the influence of the energy factor or the siting of productive forces may be different in the future than it is today. The energy and economic characteristics of regions will change considerably...and what are currently progressive trends in the siting of production may quickly become retrogressive.

Further, the Soviet Union, in addition to supplying its own industrial monolith with energy, has a continuing committment to its socialist partners in COMECON. While "potentially recoverable" reserves of oil and gas are estimated to be far above projected needs, ¹³ at least for crude oil, production targets are considered to be

inadequate, resulting in a significant shortfall of over ten per cent by 1984. Also, it is estimated that the USSR "loses" some forty-seven dollars per ton by exporting some sixty million tons of oil annually to its COMECON consumers which could have provided hard currency. It appears that prices for East European partners are scheduled to escalate again this year by some 22 per cent. 15

Development of Eastern Regions

The quest for energy lends primary impatus for the Soviet Union to step up the pace of economic development of the Siberian and Far Eastern regions. Then, too, an equalization of regional development has long been a basic principle for the completely integrated economy. Often, however, the resource pull and/or political considerations have been the basis for planning decisions. Investment in the Siberian and Far Eastern regions, at an average of 16 per cent during the previous two Five-Year Plans, has been slightly higher than the regional average. The significance of somewhat higher rates of investment, however, pales in view of the extreme climatic conditions and distances involved. Transportation costs, for example, are some 47% higher than in the rest of the USSR. 17

In the face of declining output of traditional areas of oil and gas production and a rapidly rising domestic

need for oil to fulfill Secretary Brezhnev's promise of a "motorised society," the development of Siberian reserves appears ever more feasible. But the costs and attendant difficulties of extraction in places such as Urengoi or Medveshe near the Arctic Circle are two to three times higher than those in more favorable climes. 18 The laborintensive nature of extractive industries also serves to reduce the output per worker in the remote regions to about only eighty per cent of the national average. 19 Nevertheless, problems of transport and distance must be overcome to get energy from its source to the point of utilization -- and four-fifths of all energy expended in the Soviet Union is done so in European Russia, to include the Urals and the Caucasus. 20 Shortages of fuels and power west of the Urals, first noted in the late 1950's, reached an annual total of 13% by 1973.21 A proposed solution -- transmission of electricity from hydroelectric stations in Siberia was discarded in the mid-1960's as unrealistic, since the production system could not provide enough aluminum for the construction and maintenance of some 250-300,000 kilometers of power lines required to do the job. 22

Reeping Up with the Southern Neighbors

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Pressure from China comprises part of the rationale

for rapid development of the castern Siberia and Far Eastern expanses stretching from the Enisei River to the Pacific Coast. The Far Eastern complex is the USSR's forward base for its strategic forces in the region, and although two thirds of all industry and most of the population is clustered around the vulnerable Trans-Siberian rail artery, there exists already a substantial industrial base 23 from which to launch diverse development and settlement schemes. Completion of the Baikal-Amur Railway, projected for 1982-83. 24 should aid in further dispersal of key industries and in the accelerated development of an industrial infrastructure. It is also viewed as a means of providing "new resource sites for export through Soviet Pacific ports, particularly to Japan."25

"Socialism's Stable Market" and Japan

The early 1970's witnessed the achievement of a "new stage" in the development of trade and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Japan, as planners emphasized the geographical proximity as only one of many favorable preconditions. For example, orientation of the flow of Siberian oil from east to west was deemed economically ineffective when "compared to the prospects of trade with Japan." 26 Naturally, the deepening crisis of capitalism is still cited as the basic reason for a resource-hungry Japan

turning to the USSR for energy and raw materials:

Japan no longer has the secret of continued high tempo of growth...the previous possibilities of rapid economic development of Japan are exhausted, and facing her is a sharp battle with her imperialist rivals in the international arena.27

Japan's ability to draw upon coking coal from the Iakut A.S.S.R. on a long-term basis, gained at a cost of \$450 million in credits in 1974, is touted as an example of the "mutually profitable basis" of joint cooperation. The "new stage" in economic relations between the two countries gained momentum in 1975 with new agreements on lumber, coal, and joint exploration for oil and gas of the coast of Sakhalin. The "bridge across the sea" of cooperation was, according to the Soviet media, now entering a new era of large-scale projects, to include joint mapping and development of Iakut gas deposits—with American participation.

Progress for envisaged projects in the new era, such as Japanese financing of a 4,000-mile pipeline from Tiumen to Makhodka, 30 has been impeded by both the staggering amount of capital required and by the unreliability of Soviet projections of gas and oil reserves. For example, it is extremely difficult to conduct technical trade negotiations concerning the categories of "proven" or "likely" reserves (much less "favorable possibilities") when the Ministry of Geology and the Central Statistical

Administration of the USSR have used two differing reporting methods.³¹ A bonus system for reporting new finds has further aggravated the statistical bias.³²

Joint development schemes looked technically feasible to the Japanese, but by 1972 it became evident that multinationalism, or the US participation required to preserve a political as well as financial balance, would not be realized at the scale considered. Involvement -- heavy economic commitment -- by Japan in Siberia would have important political effects upon the regional power balance, and the Soviet Union has been hard at work building up its regional trade organizations in the Soviet Far East. DAL'INTORG, the trade organization located in Nakhodka, is one of a number of organizations coordinating regional trade with Japan -- to make up for the loss of cross-border commerce with China in foodstuffs and manufactured goods. Payment to the Japanese, naturally, is limited to those vast reserves of timber, fish, or mineral commodities suitable for trade. Enticements to Japan for increased regional cooperation have included the use of the Trans-Siberian Railway for trade with Europe, stressing a freight-cost advantage of some twenty to thirty per cent over maritime trade routes.33

Japan, in turn, desires to maximize economic

relationships, but recognizes the danger of providing the Soviet Union with the capital and technology needed for resource development, as well as the uncertainty of depending upon Soviet delivery of the goods sometime in the future.

An Independent Path?

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Soviet reminders to Japan that regional trade and mutual economic cooperation are far below their potential³⁴ underscore the importance of Soviet-Japanese cooperation on a broader scale. A totally independent development path would bite hard into Soviet hard currency reserves. Deficits in trade with the west over the previous two years have been estimated at 6.4 and 5 billion dollars, respectively. Last year's excellent grain harvest and a similar yield predicted for this year are expected to reduce the trade deficit with the west to three billion dollars. The USSR reportedly plans to sell about 600 tons of gold on European markets this year to finance in part its trade deficit with the west. 36

A surge in borrowing by the USSR and other socialist countries indicates that the timeliness of the introduction of western technology is becoming more critical. Loans to the USSR, estimated to total some 20 billion dollars and increasing at a rate of 25% per year, are considered quite an acceptable debt total under international financial

standards and in view of Soviet gold and resource potential. 37 But according to some western analysts, substantial debt totals could become a dangerous policy lever for the USSR, given the possibility that the USSR might renege or threaten to do so for political reasons. However, inflationary problems in the west, to include major price increases for industrial equipment, have contributed to the increase in Soviet indebtedness. Needed equipment costs more each year, and the recent western recession severely curtailed the market for Soviet export goods, which were expected to pay for earlier loans. Indeed, western inflation may make it difficult for the Soviet Union to obtain additional loans in the future. Today, more sellers to the Soviet Union are insisting upon provisions for dealing with inflationary pressures in their contracts with the USSR.38 Thus, the compensations agreements offered to Japan and indirectly to the US can be expected to be massive in scale.

Cooperation: The Soviet View

The panorama of the Soviet media clearly formulates the differences between "wide and many-faceted cooperation" 39 and any conception of the integration of socialist and capitalist economies. Secretary Brezhnev, in delivering the single majority opinion, is quoted perpetually:

We strive to use the advantage of foreign economic relations to utilize additional possibilities for the successful fulfillment of economic tasks and saving time, for enhancing production efficiency and speeding up scientific and technical progress.40

While articles stress that the "internationalization of economic life" 41 must continue despite efforts by western imperialism to widen the drowning pool of monopoly capitalism, such cooperation must necessarily not signal any departure from the command economic system. The very heart of the current policy of detente is embodied in the Soviet Union's interest in acquiring the technology of the west:

Stable and long-term economic ties between states of two social systems comprises the material basis for the maintenance of lasting peace and security of nations. With the policy of active inclusion in the world-wide division of labor, the socialist countries make a valuable contribution to the creation o. a new system of international relations--relations established on general recognition of the principles of equality, sovereignty, mutual advantage, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Nor is Soviet interest in expanding trade to a level "more in conformity with its share in world industrial production" to be taken to mean any accommodation with capitalism. The cyclical problems of capitalism of the past sixty years have, according to Soviet economists, borne out the Leninist analysis of monopoly capitalism. Although the terminal crisis may have been delayed somewhat by "intensive reproduction" or new technology, Soviet writers are quick to affirm that

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the current "new stage" in economic cooperation with capitalist countries:

...does not signify a rejection of the ideological struggle, from the battle for the abolition of capitalist exploitation. It is directed toward providing the best possible conditions for that battle, for the development of the world socialist revolution and communist construction.

The purchase of entire production complexes, such as the Vrangel port facilities or large ammonia plants--both provided by Japanese credits--is a preferred development scheme. A desire, however, to insulate the Soviet work force from the toxin of western influence remains an obstacle to efficiency and the growth of international cooperation. There is great reluctance, for example, to discuss any possibility of foreign ownership within the USSR, and an inability to agree on inspection arrangements or even housing for foreign technicians required to oversee plant construction and worker training programs.

It appears that the "developmental imperative" for the Soviet Union, a projected shortfall in available energy resources, will sharpen toward the end of the present plan period. Yet the present level of "cautious cooperation" by Japan in the economic sphere appears an inadequate alternative for resource development. Further, the current tenor of relations between the USSR and Japan does not augur well for the possibility of intensified cooperation.

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Chapter 5

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS: CHANGES OF THE GUARD

Japanese-American Partnership

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A new US administration has moved quickly to reassure Tokyo that the United States' economic and political links to Japan and the rest of Asia are unchanged. In recognition of Japan's concern with developments on the Korean peninsula, the US, emphasized President Carter, remains firm in its decision to withdraw its ground forces from South Korea -- but will do so "in a manner that would not jeopardize peace in the area." US commitment to the defense of Korea is extremely important to Japan; 2 with huge direct investments and large commercial loans in South Korea, Japan wants no sudden changes in the power balance. Any North Korean action, possibly prompted by perceptions of South Korean vulnerability, could lead Japan to re-arm heavily. Further, the entire Japanese political spectrum understands that replacement of US troops in Korea or elsewhere in Asia would be impossible, given the memories of Imperial Japanese occupation.3

Contrary to Soviet charges that Japan schemes with the USA, Australia, and even China in anti-Soviet military co-operation in the Asian sphere. Japanese concern with "ambiguity" in US policy with respect to Japanese defense matters has led thus far only to a reassessment of her conventional

defense capabilities. The "extremely high" tempo of growth of the Japanese military budget decried in the pages of Izvestiia in October, 1976, in fact, represents a modest increase, in view of the need to protect Japan's vital sea lanes of supply. An increase in Japanese anti-submarine warfare means, planned since 1975, will not appreciably change the Japanese contribution to joint defense of the sealanes with the US Seventh Fleet.

State meetings between the new Japanese Premier and US President in March of this year, tabling the issues of defense and mounting Japanese trade surpluses with the US and Europe, signalled no major change in the security relationship between the two nations.

American attempts at "neoatlantism" or making Japan a "third foothold" for the US and Europe in the military as well as economic sense, according to the USSR, are now more important to the United States in a world where the relation of forces is now more favorable to socialism. 6

The more realistic US affirmation of US-Japanese partnership: "There is not a nation with whom we share a broader range of interests," suggests no change in the US connection for Japan.

The Peking Revisionists

Despite a consistent and long-term policy and

propaganda effort designed to encourage the emergence of a Chinese leadership more favorable to the Soviet Union after the death of Mao in September, 1976, 8 the resumption of polemics in February of this year indicates that rivalry and confrontation will continue to be the keystone of their relationship, at least for the near term. Although the struggle for the helm in Peking is still unfolding, a more moderate and expanded leadership under Chairman Hua Kuo Feng shows no sign of departing from its foreign policy stance which entails independence from Moscow and contacts with the west.

Competition for Influence in Tokyo

Japan, interestingly enough, was a major commercial beneficiary of the Sino-Soviet rift. By 1965, she was one of Chins's major trade partners and suppliers of industrial plants and equipment. It was not until after 1972, however, that the Japanese, convinced that the US did not intend to make China the "senior partner" in Asia, readily stepped up the pace of trade and mutual relations with China. Maritime and aviation agreements were concluded, and communications between the two countries will soon be expanded. Most importantly, aided by the lure of resources and traditional (at least from the Japanese side) cultural affinities and the opportunity for "equidistance" from Moscow, the

Chinese managed to gain the grudging acceptance of the Japanese for the inclusion of the infamous "anti-hegemony" clause in the proposed Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan. The agreement, according to the new Japanese Premier, will soon be signed by both parties as "only a matter of natural course."

Given the "crude machinations" of the Chinese to undermine the progress of Soviet-Japanese cooperation, Moscow rather gloatingly acknowledged a sharp drop in commerce between Japan and China. 11 which had been growing at a rate of ten to twenty per cent per annum. 12 Trade of Japanese steel for Chinese oil, a basic factor in Chinese hopes to finance the 5th Five-Year Plan, 13 dropped by 22% in the first six months of 1976. China's oil extraction program was oriented, in fact, toward supplying her island neighbor, but the high sulfur content of Chinese oil cost refiners some sixty cents more to process than oil from other sources. Japan, furthermore, came under pressure from the Middle East suppliers to purchase in the quantities that Japan had claimed were necessary at the time of the 1973 energy crisis. 14 China, in attempting to make up trade deficits in 1974 and 1975, was forced to seek loans from Japan and elsewhere, in addition to cutting 1976 imports of industrial equipment by ten per cent. 15

Problems for Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)

Economic problems head the list of priorities for the new Japanese leadership. The impressive growth statistics of yesteryear have faded into memory; the gross national product rose by a figure of only 1.3% in 1976. Pressures for recovery are high, and Japan's 13th Premier, Takeo Pukuda, described as a "middle-of-the-road pragmatist," 16 has pledged to rebuild the economy.

Fukuda is also faced with a revitalization of his
Liberal Democratic Party which, torn by factionalism and
payoff scandals, polled only 42% of the vote in the December, 1976 election. Further, the conservative LDP, having
lost its legislative majority in the Japanese Diet for the
first time in twenty-one years, 17 must now work harder at
building conservative cooperation across party lines.
Fukuda's background as an "old-school" politician signals
no change for Moscow; the new Premier is not expected to
deviate from his consistent opposition to Japanese communism and his predisposition for close ties with Washington.
No Help From the Japanese Left

Japanese domestic problems--joblessness, inflation, and reaction to the payoff scandals--held the promise of gains for Japan's Socialist and Communist Parties. A history of unproductive relations with the Japanese left,

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however, led Pravda's Tokyo correspondent to predict little more than a further weakening of the LDP. In fact, a coalition of progressive forces, in view of "differing opinions" in the Japan Socialist Party about cooperation with the communists, was hardly expected by Moscow:

... The Communist Party strives for unity of actions with the other major party of the parliamentary opposition, the Socialist Party of Japan... nevertheless, both parties are functioning separately in the election campaign. 18

The Socialists are now branded as defectors in the Soviet view, having abandoned earlier objections to the "anti-hegemony clause" in the proposed Peace Treaty with China. 19 The Socialists, who scored only negligible gains in the election, had been the only Japanese group to express so much as an interest in Moscow's Asian Collective Security Scheme.

The failure of the Soviet Communist Party to effect any kind of reconciliation with the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and to secure their attendance at the 25th Party Congress in the Soviet capital is characteristic of interparty relations over the past two decades. The Soviet press very blandly reviewed the results of the 13th Congress of the JCP, at which—in contrast to earlier orthodoxy—the Japanese Communists decided to expunge terms such as wictatorship of the proletariat. and even the words "Marxism—torship of the proletariat"

Leninism" from its constitution to make it more palatable to the traditionally anticommunist Japanese electorate. The JCP, anticipating sizeable gains in the recent election from a backlash against corruption and payoff scandals, pledged to continue molding its own independent policies on the basis of its singular "theoretical, political, and organizational experience."

Resistance to meddling from Moscow or Peking, critical to establishment of the JCP as a viable alternative to the LDP, has also led to a broadening of relationships with western communist parties. Joint communiques with the Italian, French, Spanish, and other communist parties have stressed, not surprisingly, freedom and democracy; a commitment to "protect the plural party system, including the change of administrations as a result of elections" at some future socialist stage 22 as well as other "guarantees" comprised a vigorous pre-election campaign.

However, despite recent gains in Party membership and an increase in the total of votes received, the JCP slid from third to fifth largest party in the Japanese parliament as a result of the recent election. The JCP, still apparently a long way from a progressive image for the Japanese public at large, realizes that its success as a political force depends upon preserving its nationalist

most vociferous supporters of Japanese territorial claims against the Soviet Union.

A Chill in the Wind

Soviet-Japanese relations occupy an important place in the general system of international relations. The political climate in the Far East and the whole Asian continent depends on the direction these relations will take.23

Despite the acknowledgment above, issued from Moscow in May of last year, relations between the Soviet Union and her island neighbor appear to be frozen. Moreover, in recent months, the temperature appears to be dropping.

The Soviet Union very sharply accused Japan of "a dangerous submissiveness to Peking" when it became evident in January, 1976, that Japan would accept the notorious anti-hegemony clause in an agreement with the Chinese. This, noted the USSR, could only be considered as an "unfriendly act" toward the Soviet Union. A personal effort by Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to dissuade the Japanese from "capitulation" to the Maoists, under the guise of talks on the Peace Treaty issue, proved fruitless. In fact, Foreign Minister Gromyko's refusal to accept a purely Japanese or "neutral" interpretation of the suspect clause was met by renewed demands that the USSR return the disputed island territories to Japan.

Gromyko's visit, which ended a series of annual Foreign Ministers' consultations, was hailed in the Soviet press as demonstrating "good-neighborly relations and cultural ties;" 26 peace treaty negotiations were to continue as cultural and commercial exchange continued to expand. Japan's "unfortunate" decision, however, was conceived to be a Soviet loss to China in the regional power game, and another attempt to "squeeze Asia into a triangle with Washington, Tokyo, and Peking at the apexes." 27

Moscow, as reflected in Gromyko's abrupt departure from the Japanese capital, has remained absolutely inflexible on the issue of disputed island territories. No insurmountable obstacles to a treaty of peace exist, insists Moscow--but progress cannot be made as long as Japan attempts to reduce the treaty to a question of territory.

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Soviet intransigence on the territorial issue is well documented; the Soviet leadership has categorically, at every opportunity, declared the matter settled. Secretary Breshnev's claims that the Japanese are simply trying to manipulate the territorial question ignore the fact that, for the Japanese, the question is not a logical one--not of the importance of the islands to security or

for traditional fishing grounds, but for a sense of national identity. Therefore, the new Japanese Premier is most unlikely to accede a single point on this highly emotional political issue. Japan, according to Mr. Fukuda, desires treaties of peace with both the USSR and China, but "problems of our claim for the return of the northern territories" must be settled first.

Soviet-Japanese relations were further strained with the surprise landing of a Soviet supersonic all-weather MIG-25 fighter plane at a small airport on Japan's northernmost main island on September 6, 1976. The subsequent failure of the Japanese government to return the defecting pilot and craft immediately and-much worse-failure to deny the interference of a third-party nation was branded as

...unfriendly to the Soviet Union and as disregard for the elementary norms of international law and the practice of relations between states, especially neighbor states. In doing all this, the Japanese government is aggravating Soviet-Japanese relations, their present and future. 30

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Japan's role in the affair, continued Moscow, was in flagrant violation of the Soviet-Japanese Consular Convention currently in effect. It remained, however, for an announcement of cooperation with the United States in the dismantling, inspection, and relocation of the aircraft

"under Japan's initiative" 31 to signal the failure of a Soviet pressure campaign. The Soviet media ceased comment about Air Force pilot V. I. Belenko, already in safe haven in the United States, and returned to the staple criticism of "military and certain rightist circles" 32 in Japan. The "military-industrial complex," in contrast to the Japanese people as a whole, was again singled out as responsible for creating the "Red Peril" from the north and for Japan's irresponsible actions in the Belenko affair. Pishing Near the Soviet Coast: A Falling Barometer

A renewed diplomatic dispute over Japanese fishing in Soviet waters, simmering since the Kremlin's establishment of a temporary 200-mile coastal fishing limit in late December, 1976, 33 threatens to boil over--with the help of the territories issue.

Soviet seizures of Japanese fishing boats and crews in the vicinity of the disputed northern islands over the past three decades, ³⁴ a persistent source of regional tension, has not been a barrier to Soviet-Japanese cooperation in the regulation of catches in the open seas. But despite assurances by the Soviet Pisheries Minister that Japanese fishermen could continue fishing in Russian waters until new agreements were concluded, ³⁵ Soviet gunboats chased some fifty Japanese vessels from fishing grounds

off Kamchatka back to home ports in Hokkaido just three days after imposing the new limit formally on March 1st.

Following Japanese protests, it was agreed that fishing in the area could be continued until a temporary agreement on catch levels by Japanese trawlers was reached by the end of March. ³⁶ But a deadlock in negotiations, confounded by the territorial claim, kept Japanese boats close to home; the USSR, in turn, issued an ultimatum to the effect that until a bilateral agreement on fishing is achieved, any Japanese caught operating within the Soviet coastal zone will be arrested and the vessel detained. ³⁷

In short, the Japanese accept the right of the USSR to impose the fisheries zone, but cannot accept inclusion of the four islands north of Hokkaido within that scheme. The place for discussion of territorial matters, according to the Japanese, is the peace-treaty negotiations scheduled to resume this year. 38 The USSR, however, remained unmoved by personal communications from Japanese Premier Fukuda, and even initially denied the messenger, Cabinet Secretary Sunao Sonoda, a visa to Moscow. This diplomatic slight added to public criticism of Japan's most recent attempt at accommodation on the fisheries issue, vital to every Japanese household. The Japanese, true to the new Premier's policy of remaining "patient yet persistent in making the

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Russians understand our territorial claim³⁹ offered to recognize the validity of the Soviet fishing zone even around the disputed islands—as long as it was very clear that this meant no relinquishment of territorial claims. 40

At this writing, talks remain deadlocked, and there has been no signal to indicate that Moscow is amenable to Japan's recent proposal. The Soviet Union's relations with her island neighbor, already at a low ebb, show little chance for improvement without some continuation of a dialogue on the territorial issue. Renewed demands that Japan reimburse the USSR some eleven million dellars for damage sustained by the Soviet MIG-25 prior to its return-piecemeal—to the Soviet Union have not added to the "new stage" in cooperation between the two countries. In fact, a further deterioration in relations could have a significant economic impact.

Chapter 6

RELATIONS: THE PROSPECTS

The changing of the guard in the past year has not, it appears, radically altered for the Brezhnev regime the political, economic, and social "correlation of forces" impacting upon her relations with Japan. The worsening political climate, however, could shift the balance in a negative direction.

It is evident that in the post-Mao period, the Soviet Union has at least temporarily abandoned expectations for an improved relationship with her communist rival. After some months of relative quiet on the propaganda front, the annual celebration of Lenin's birthday in Moscow on April 21st, 1977, provided an opportunity to issue the strongest attack upon China since Mao's passage:

The known position of China, in which, regrettably, there have been no changes in recent times, inflicts direct damage on the anti-imperialist struggle and the cause of peace...Attempts are continuing in Peking at building up international tensions and striking alliances with the most reactionary forces...

The charges, which inspired the Chinese envoy in the Soviet capital to walk out of the celebration, indicate that a competition with the USSR for future influence in Japan can be expected to continue.

The United States, in reaffirming the special position

of Japan and assuring her of "a certain degree of stability" in Asian security matters has -- with the exception of US withdrawals from South Korea--generally underwritten the status quo. Concurrently, the US has endorsed and encouraged Japan's plans for an expanded role in world affairs (although a major increase in military responsibility would be unacceptable to the majority of the Japanese public) which would more approximate its status as the second largest western economic power. The expanded, more independent role envisaged by Tokyo will be carefully executed in order to dispel misconceptions of Japanese economic expansionism -- already a concern in western markets. Basically, the Fukuda leadership signals no reorientation of Japanese policy from that of economic growth and stability and the maintenance of unfettered trade. In recognition of an understanding from the US on security matters and the unchanged -- at least for the near future -- status of the Sino-Soviet quarrel, Japan has opted to continue her policy of equidistance from both China and the Soviet Union.

If the fundamental Soviet goals of preventing Sino-Japanese cooperation and loosening the alliance between Japan and the US (without prompting Japanese rearmament) remain on the long-term regional policy list, what of the near term for relations with Japan?

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In view of the developmental imperative for encouraging Japanese participation in the development of energy and mineral reserves east of the Urals, it would seem that the USSR has not succeeded in creating the necessary preconditions for attracting the desired quantities of Japanese credits and technology into the development scheme. In fact, a very harsh treatment of Japan in the present fisheries negotiations could result in nudging Tokyo closer to Peking and slow or even halt Japanese investment in Siberia.

Japanese insistence upon the return of all four southern Kuril Islands to Japan is beyond rational analysis, given the rather limited strategic value of the islands in question. Naturally, any move by the USSR to accommodate the Japanese would open up the question of pre-WWII boundaries and immediately complicate Soviet border problems with China and other countries.

A Soviet compromise would remove a major stumbling block to expanded economic benefits through cooperation with Japan. However, given the inescapable results of a precedent of returning territory, the political imperative of intransigence on the territorial issue appears, at least in the short term, to outweigh any perceived need for improved relations. A significant growth,

nonetheless, in Chinese influence in Japan would be a powerful stimulus for new measures to improve ties with the island nation.

While there do not appear on the immediate horizon any new Soviet initiatives which would prompt a cautious Japan to separate the issues of territory and treaty, Japan has been careful to state that exchange between the two countries, "particularly in the economic sphere," should not be hampered.

Nevertheless, economic problems after the energy crisis and growing resource needs have not led Japan to subordinate the issue of territory to commerce—at least not yet. Also, traditional Japanese mistrust of the Soviet Union was strongly reinforced by a stiffening of bargaining terms by the USSR after the oil crisis of 1973. The Japanese are well aware that a quality highly respected in their country—age—will soon alter the collective leadership in Moscow; this factor undoubtedly contributes to Japanese hesitation.

Barring a further degeneration of relations between the two countries, trade with Japan--about four per cent of the total Soviet turnover in 1976⁵--can be expected to grow. However, projected deficits in exploitable energy sources and the need for a technological transfusion

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to assure achievement of the goals of the current 10th Pive-Year Plan--"the plan of quality" --should become more critical toward the end of the plan period. Concurrently, the regional development of the Soviet Far East, the stalemate between the USSR and China notwithstanding, can be expected to grow in importance. In the opinion of the author, a competition with Peking for influence in Tokyo, and a perception of US reluctance to maintain a major presence in Asia--in concert with the "developmental imperative" outlined in this paper--will lead to new Soviet initiatives for cooperation with Japan. These measures must address the traditional problems of a peace treaty and the northern territories--a price thus far unacceptable to Moscow.

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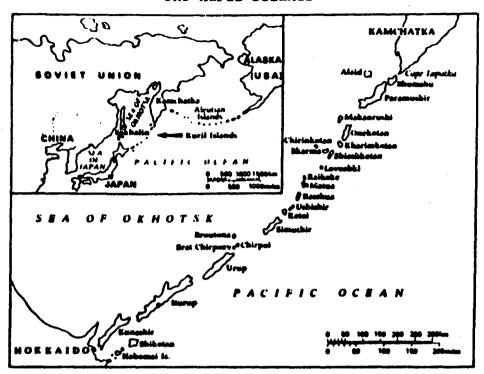
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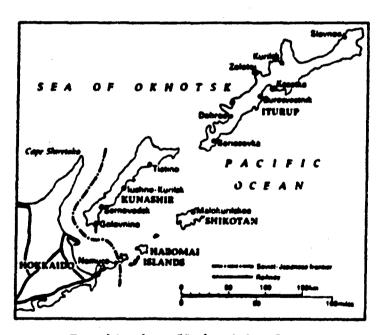
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 - ³⁷Clifford May and Allan Field, p. 13.
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- 40 Clifford May and Allan Field, p. 38.

Chapter 6

- l"Leninizm--revoliutsionnoe znaniia nashei epokhi (Doklad tovarishcha M. V. Zimianina na torzhestvennom zacedanii v Moskve posviashchennom 107-yi godovschchine so dnia rozhdeniia V. I. Lenina)" (Leninism--The Revolutionary Knowledge of our Epoch) (Speech of Comrade M. V. Zimianin at the Grand Meeting in Moscow on the Occasion of the 107th Anniversary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin), Pravda, April 23, 1977, p. 2.
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- 3"Japan's Flexible Man," Newsweek, January 10, 1977, p. 13.
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